



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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ABS focus on the national capital

Putting life in the national capital into focus was made easier today with the release of **Australian Capital Territory in Focus, 1997** by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The publication, with its wealth of current and historical data, underscores the perception of many residents that Canberra has a good quality of life, despite the occasional negative bump. It is the ABS's major resource document on life in the ACT and the surrounding region and is a powerful research document for business and Government.

Highlights of the publication show:

- As at June 1996, there were just over 13,000 businesses employing wage and salary earners in the ACT. Just under 66 per cent of these businesses were small businesses employing less than five people, 17.5 per cent employing 5-9 people and 8.1 per cent employing 10-19 people.
- Another 14,000 businesses employing wage and salary earners are located in the Australian Capital Region (ACR).
- Just over 60 per cent of the 27,000 businesses in the ACR were small businesses of which the highest numbers were in agriculture, forestry and fishing, retail trade, property and business services and construction.
- In 1996-97 about 26 per cent of ACT people were employed in the Government administration and defence industry. Retailing (13.3 per cent), property and business services (12.1 per cent), education (8.8 per cent) and health and community services (8.1 per cent) were the other major employment industries. At 30 June 1996 Canberra and Queanbeyan accounted for 69.5 per cent of the labour force in the Australian Capital Region.
- Life expectancy at birth is 81.5 years for females and 76.7 for males, the highest for all States and Territories in Australia.
- Between the 1991 and 1996 Censuses, the population continued to grow strongly in the younger suburbs of Tuggeranong, Gunghalin-Hall and South Canberra, while population in Belconnen, Weston Creek-Stromlo, North Canberra and Woden Valley declined.
- In 1996 high school and college retention rates at 91.9 per cent were much higher than the national average of 71.3 per cent.
- Crime rose 18.5 per cent between 1994-95 and 1995-96. Burglary, fraud and other offences of theft accounted for 65.3 per cent of offences.
- Just over one-quarter (25.7 per cent) of ACT people were born overseas, nearly half of them in Europe and the former USSR and one-fifth from Asia.
- Some 86 per cent of people aged 15 years and over reported their health was either good, very good or excellent. Headaches, common cold, asthma, arthritis and

hypertension are the main illnesses.

- Cultural funding per head of population was \$85.10 in the ACT, which was the second highest in Australia, behind the Northern Territory with \$382.00.

Australian Capital Territory in Focus, 1997 (cat. no. 1307.8) is available at the ABS Bookshop, 9th Floor FAI House, London Circuit, Canberra City.

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